Reader’s Digest profiles Hanger patient

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September 15, 2009 -- The story of 32-year-old Bosnian civil war survivor and Hanger patient Maja Kazazic is featured in the October 2009 issue of *Reader’s Digest* .

Maja was just 16-years-old when she was severely injured by a mortar shell while playing soccer with her friends in Mostar, Yugoslavia during the Bosnian civil war in 1993. Having sustained life threatening injuries, including the emergency amputation of her leg and ensuing infection, Maja’s incredible journey of survival would take her to the United States, without any family or the ability to speak English.

The *Reader’s Digest* article profiles her harrowing survival, her impressive rehabilitation, her thriving new life in Tampa, FL, and the life-changing inspiration she received from a young disabled dolphin named “Winter”.

An excerpt from the October 2009 *Reader’s Digest* article, “Woman Who Lost Leg Finds Inspiration from Disabled Dolphin”:

> “If [Winter the dolphin] can do this, there's no way I can't, she thought. She approached the trainers, who put her in touch with the inventors, Hanger Prosthetics & Orthotics in Bethesda, Maryland. Within ten days, she had a new leg. With its soft liner and built-in microprocessor that adjusts the fit for different activities and terrains, ‘for the first time in almost 16 years, I was pain-free.’”

Click here to read the article in its entirety on the Reader’s Digest website.

About Maja’s prosthetic leg – Fit by Hanger practitioner Addam Griner in Trinity, FL, Maja’s prosthetic leg incorporates the same gel Winter the dolphin wears, in addition to a newly-developed, yet to be released microprocessor-controlled socket system called the V-Hold. Scheduled to be commercially available in 2010, the V-Hold uses a vacuum suction technology to provide improved fit, comfort, and control of a prosthetic leg – regardless of activity, walking speed, terrain, and even elevation. The V-Hold is a “smart” socket system in that it measures and monitors what the wearer is doing – walking, jogging, picking up speed, slowing down, sitting, standing, jumping – and adjusts the amount of suction within the socket to create the ideal fit.

About Winter’s prosthetic tail – Hanger’s Vice President of Prosthetics Kevin Carroll and Sarasota, FL Practice Manager Dan Strzempka have volunteered their nights and weekends to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and provided Winter’s prosthetic tails since 2006. The unique levels of R&D necessary to fit a prosthetic tail on a dolphin have resulted in the development of a new gel material that is benefiting human patients like Maja. Winter’s case is the first time a dolphin’s entire tail fluke has been replaced by a prosthetic device.

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